



LIVING ERA

FATS WALLER

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'

25 GREATEST HITS



FATS WALLER AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'

25 GREATEST HITS

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| [1] AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' [3:00] | [10] I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE [3:13]
with Adelaide Hall (vocal) Fats Waller
(organ accomp. and interjections) | [18] BLUE TURNING GREY OVER YOU [4:32] |
| [2] OH, SUSANNAH (DUST OFF THAT OLD
PIANNA) [2:32] | [11] ALLIGATOR CRAWL [2:57]
Piano solo | [19] I'M GONNA SIT RIGHT DOWN AND
WRITE MYSELF A LETTER [3:37] |
| [3] HONEYSUCKLE ROSE [2:36] | [12] WHEN SOMEBODY THINKS YOU'RE
WONDERFUL [3:37] | [20] I AIN'T GOT NOBODY [2:48] |
| [4] HANDFUL OF KEYS [2:46]
Piano solo | [13] 12TH STREET RAG [2:49] | [21] UNTIL THE REAL THING COMES ALONG
IT WILL HAVE TO DO [3:31] |
| [5] YOUR FEET'S TOO BIG [3:03] | [14] SUGAR ROSE [3:09] | [22] KEEPIN' OUT OF MISCHIEF NOW [3:08]
Piano solo |
| [6] THE JOINT IS JUMPIN' [2:47] | [15] VIPER'S DRAG [3:06]
Piano solo | [23] TAIN'T NOBODY'S BIZ-NEZZ IF I DO!
[2:59] |
| [7] SWEET AND SLOW [3:29] | [16] EVERYBODY LOVES MY BABY (BUT MY
BABY DON'T LOVE NOBODY BUT ME) [2:53] | [24] MY VERY GOOD FRIEND, THE MILKMAN
[3:30] |
| [8] I'VE GOT A FEELING I'M FALLING [2:50]
Piano solo | [17] SQUEEZE ME [3:08] | [25] TWO SLEEPY PEOPLE [3:06] |
| [9] DINAH [3:18] | | |

Piano, organ, celesta and all vocals (except as indicated) by Fats Waller

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Lawrence Wright/Redwood [18]
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Fats Waller is the universally beloved face of jazz. Instantly warmed to and appreciated by the young and old who are otherwise not great jazz devotees, he reigns in the jazz "Hall of Fame" alongside Armstrong, Ellington and very few others primarily because he was a communicator. Pianist, vocalist, comedian and showman *par excellence*, he was indicted (if not actually condemned outright) by the purists for the heresy of *commercialism*, for having undermined the fabric, for renegeing on the sacred code by committing the cardinal sin of having made jazz more accessible to the wider audience. Jazz and the gramophone were so closely intertwined in time, however, that it could hardly have been otherwise. Of course Fats cashed in on the opportunity, yet the pedigree, the underlying sincerity, are without question. The "antic disposition", the irrepressible wit, the frequent heavy sarcasm and self-mockery, while masking a kindly heart and a vulnerable artist of the highest musical sensitivity, also accidentally obscure a formidable keyboard mastery and an awesome left-hand to rival that of many a great concert pianist.

Born in Waverley, New York, of Virginia-born parents on 21 May 1904, Fats had the South in his soul, albeit once removed. His father, Edward, preached at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem; so, apart from gaining his early love of the church organ (a love which was to last through life), he became aware of jazz piano trends from a comparatively early age, and was subsequently able to assimilate the Harlem stride styles of his two youthful heroes, his preceptor James P. Johnson (1894-1955) and Willie "The Lion" Smith (1897-1973). After working as an organist and pianist in silent-movie theatres in New York, Fats first gave full rein to his ebullient, outgoing personality as a vaudeville pianist and entertainer in Philadelphia and Chicago in the mid-1920s. His composing activities began with piano solos (some unpublished in his lifetime) in 1922, followed by countless fine and characteristic songs, in collaboration with Spencer Williams (1889-1965), Clarence Williams (1898-1965), Andy Razaf (1895-1973) and others. With the last named he contributed numbers to the black revues *Keep Shufflin'* (1928) and *Hot Chocolates* (1929), which transferred the nightlife of Harlem's Connie's Inn to Broadway with its 85-strong cast of black singers and dancers, providing Louis Armstrong with his Broadway debut and introducing to the world such immortals as **Ain't Misbehavin'**, the quintessential Waller number which remains an all-time favourite and is also the title of the hit show which has been running since 1978. Truly international fame came to Fats around 1934 and he reached the peak of his popularity as a songwriter and recording artist during the short period from about 1940 to his premature death in Kansas City on 15 December 1943.

Fats Waller never lost sight of the ethnic value of jazz but, as an astute performer, he realised that in order to stand out, to be truly "recognised", one had to compete to some degree with the commercial phenomena: viz. the Gershwins and the Irving Berlins of the

world. It is perhaps in the timeless popular appeal of Fats's many hits that their longevity lies. A prolific writer and composer, Fats wrote, co-wrote or had some hand in the writing of over 500 songs in addition to having been an active performer and recorder. He submitted more than 70 songs to composer-guitarist and bandleader Clarence Williams during the five-year period of their association, although the bulk of these were unpublished. His association with Grand Duke of Madagascar Razafinkeriefu was perhaps more redolent of lasting successes, although many of their collaborations were sold outright for a pittance – such was the fate of black composers attempting to survive in the highly competitive Tin-Pan-Alley environment.

This CD anthology contains a fair cross-section of the best of Fats Waller including, in chronological order of composition, the following Waller creations or collaborations: **Squeeze Me** (1925), **Alligator Crawl** (1927), **Ain't Misbehavin'**, **Honeysuckle Rose** and **I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling** (all from 1929), **Blue Turning Grey Over You** (1930), **Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now** (1932), **Handful Of Keys** (1933), **Viper's Drag (The Reefer Song)** (1934), **Sugar Rose** (1936) and **The Joint Is Jumpin'** (1938, unpublished). Additionally, we hear Fats's dextrous playing and playful delivery to great advantage in his handling of standards by other writers and composers, versions which in many cases, by virtue of his inimitable and unfailingly sympathetic style, have come to be regarded as definitive.

In **Oh, Susannah**, a tailor-made Waller swinger by New Yorkers Irving Caesar (b. 1895) and Johnny Marks (1909-1985), we are treated to a hotted-up version of a classic Stephen Foster plantation song of 1848, while from the pen of composer-songwriter and singer Doris Fisher (b. New York, 1915) we hear Fats's ace timing and droll wise-cracking superbly blended in **Your Feet's Too Big**, a 1935 song which was an early success for the Ink Spots. **Sweet And Slow** (1935) by partners Al Dubin (1891-1945) and Harry Warren (1893-1981) exemplifies the softer, more intimate Waller, whereas **Dinah**, that 1925 standard by New York-born café-entertainer-turned-lyricist Sam M. Lewis (1885-1959) and fellow New Yorker Harry Akst (1894-1963) which was a hit for Crosby and the Mills Brothers in 1932, is an up-tempo rendition in characteristic vein. In **I Can't Give You Anything But Love**, a timeless gem from the partnership of Dorothy Fields (1904-1974) and Jimmy McHugh (1894-1969) originally featured in Lew Leslie's black revue *Blackbirds of 1928*, Fats superbly accompanies and playfully mocks the "sincere" Adelaide Hall and in **When Somebody Thinks You're Wonderful** (by Massachusetts-born gentleman-farmer-turned-filmscore-composer Harry Woods, 1896-1970) we hear him in the relaxed style that immediately comes to mind whenever his name is mentioned. Hot is the adjective for **12th Street Rag** (originally a piano solo of 1916 by Texan composer, arranger and author Euday L. Bowman,

1887-1949) and **Everybody Loves My Baby** (a 1924 standard by Fats's early collaborator Spencer Williams, co-written with Jack Palmer). Another of Waller's best-loved recorded hits was the collaboration of two New Yorkers – lyricist Joe Young (1889-1939) and pianist, café-singer and composer Fred E. Ahlert (1892–1953): **I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter**, while **I Ain't Got Nobody** (1916), the earliest composition included here, is a classic little number variously recorded by Fats in plaintive piano and organ solo versions.

Until The Real Thing Comes Along, a 1936 offering from the New York songwriting duo of Sammy Cahn (1913-1992) and Saul Chaplin (b.1912), and that Waller mega-success **My Very Good Friend, The Milkman** (by Jimmy Burke and Harold Spina, b.1906) again show the sentimental side of Fats with the effervescent, sardonic humour occasionally bubbling through the pauses for breath. **'Tain't Nobody's Biz-Nezz If I Do!**, a durable jazz classic from 1922 by Clarence Williams provides Fats with yet another swinger, while in **Two Sleepy People**, that classic duet standard by Frank Loesser (1910-1969) and Hoagy Carmichael (1899-1981) originally sung by Shirley Ross and Bob Hope in the 1938 Paramount movie *Thanks For The Memory*, he conjures up a partner purely by humour and vocal inflexion.

Peter Dempsey (1995)

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ASV LTD.

1 Beaumont Avenue, London W14 9LP

COMPILED AND PRODUCED BY PETER DEMPSEY

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[1] **AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'**
(Razaf/Waller/Brooks)
with F.W. and his Continental (i.e. London) Rhythm: Dave Wilkins (trumpet) George Chisholm (trombone) Alfie Kahn (tenor sax) Alan Ferguson (guitar) Len Harrison (bass) Edmond Ros (drums)
OEA 6384-2 Recorded London, 21/8/38

[2] **OH, SUSANNAH (DUST OFF THAT OLD PIANNA)**
(Caesar/Lerner/Marks)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Rudy Powell (clarinet/alto sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Harry Dial (drums)
BS 88787 Recorded New York, 6/3/35

[3] **HONEYSUCKLE ROSE**
(Razaf/Waller)
with Bill Coleman (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/alto sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Billy Taylor (bass) Harry Dial (drums)
BS 84921 Recorded New York, 7/11/34

[4] **HANDFUL OF KEYS**
(Waller)
Piano solo
BVE 49759 Recorded New York, 1/3/29

[5] **YOUR FEET'S TOO BIG**
(Benson/Fisher)
with John Hamilton (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/tenor sax) John Smith (guitar) Cedric Wallace (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
BS 043348 Recorded New York, 3/11/39

[6] **THE JOINT IS JUMPIN'**
(Razaf/Waller/Johnson)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/alto sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
BS 014646 Recorded New York, 7/10/37

[7] **SWEET AND SLOW**
(Dubin/Warren)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Rudy Powell (clarinet/alto sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Harry Dial (drums)
BS 89761 Recorded New York, 8/5/35



[8] **I'VE GOT A FEELING I'M FALLING**
(Rose/Link/Waller)
Piano solo
BVE 49494-2
Recorded Camden, New Jersey, 2/8/29

[9] **DINAH**
(Lewis/Young/Akst)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Rudy Powell (clarinet/alto sax) James Smith (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Arnold Boling (drums)
BS 88989
Recorded Camden, New Jersey, 24/6/35

[10] **I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE**
(Fields/McHugh)
with Adelaide Hall (vocal) Fats Waller (organ accomp. and interjections)
OEA 6392-2 Recorded London, 28/8/38

[11] **ALLIGATOR CRAWL**
(Waller)
Piano solo
BS 86210 Recorded New York, 16/11/34

[12] **WHEN SOMEBODY THINKS YOU'RE WONDERFUL**
(Woods)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/alto sax) James Smith (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Yank Porter (drums)
BS 98172 Recorded New York, 29/11/35

[13] **12TH STREET RAG**
(Bowman)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Rudy Powell (clarinet/alto sax) James Smith (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Arnold Boling (drums)
BS 88995
Recorded Camden, New Jersey, 24/6/35

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CD AJA 5174

[14] **SUGAR ROSE**
(Ponce/Waller)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/alto sax) James Smith (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Yank Porter (drums)
BS 98895 Recorded New York, 1/2/36

[15] **VIPER'S DRAG**
(Waller)
Piano solo
BS 86211 Recorded New York, 16/11/34

[16] **EVERYBODY LOVES MY BABY (BUT MY BABY DON'T LOVE NOBODY BUT ME)**
(Palmer/Williams)
with John Hamilton (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/tenor sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Cedric Wallace (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
BS 057083 Recorded New York, 6/11/40

[17] **SQUEEZE ME**
(Williams/Waller/Razaf)
with Fats Waller and his Rhythm: John Hamilton (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/tenor sax) John Smith (guitar) Cedric Wallace (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
OA 0415280 Recorded New York, 10/8/39

[18] **BLUE TURNING GREY OVER YOU**
(Razaf/Waller)
with Fats Waller and his Rhythm: Herman Autrey (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/alto sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
2A 010651 Recorded New York, 9/6/37

[19] **I'M GONNA SIT RIGHT DOWN AND WRITE MYSELF A LETTER**
(Young/Ahlert)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Rudy Powell (clarinet/alto sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Harry Dial (drums)
BS 89764 Recorded New York, 8/5/35

[20] **I AIN'T GOT NOBODY**
(Williams/Graham)
Personnel as track 19
BS 88777 Recorded New York, 6/3/35

[21] **UNTIL THE REAL THING COMES ALONG IT WILL HAVE TO DO**
(Cahn/Chaplin/Freeman)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/alto sax) James Smith (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
BS 109409 Recorded New York, 1/8/36

[22] **KEEPIN' OUT OF MISCHIEF NOW**
(Razaf/Waller)
Piano solo
2A 010652 Recorded New York, 11/6/37

[23] **TAIN'T NOBODY'S BIZ-NEZZ IF I DO!**
(Grainger/Prince/Robbins)
with John Hamilton (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/tenor sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Cedric Wallace (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
BS 057085 Recorded New York, 6/11/40

[24] **MY VERY GOOD FRIEND, THE MILKMAN**
(Burke/Spina)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Rudy Powell (clarinet/alto sax) James Smith (guitar) Charles Turner (bass) Arnold Boling (drums)
BS 88992
Recorded Camden, New Jersey, 24/6/35

[25] **TWO SLEEPY PEOPLE**
(Loesser/Carmichael)
with Herman Autrey (trumpet) Gene Sedic (clarinet/tenor sax) Albert Casey (guitar) Cedric Wallace (bass) Slick Jones (drums)
BS 027289 Recorded New York, 13/10/38

Piano, organ, celesta and all vocals (except as indicated) by Fats Waller



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